(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has increased or decreased over the previous assessment, giving the details thereof; and

(d) the measures being taken to increase the forest cover in the State?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Forest Survey of India has been assessing the forest cover of the country biennially since 1987. As per the latest State of Forest Report, 1999, the forest cover of Andhra Pradesh is 44229 sq. km. which has shown an increase of 939 sq. km. over the previous assessment.

(d) Forest Conservation and Afforestation Programmes are undertaken by the State of Andhra Pradesh from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. A World Bank aided Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project has been launched during 2002-2003 for the protection and conservation of forests.

Animals Sacrifice in Orissa

†1111. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government are aware that lacs of animals are sacrificed in various parts of the country, particularly in Orissa, on the occasion of Mata Puja, as reported in The Hindustan Times dated the 17th October, 2002;

(b) Whether it is an offence in Orissa but the State Government has failed to ensure compliance of law, by the people; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to save the animals and to ensure stringent compliance of laws with regard to prevention of cruelty against animals, alongwith the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Government is aware of the report in The Hindustan Times dated 17.10.2002. The Government of Orissa has reported that there is no incidence of indiscriminate animal sacrifice on the occasion of Mata Puja.

(b) and (c) The State Government have issued instructions to District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police to take appropriate steps for stoppage of alleged animal sacrifice. The provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 are being strictly enforced.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

Act, 1960 are being strictly enforced.

Preservation of environment and forests at Surajkund and Badkal Lakes

† 1112. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that land in famous tourists places of Surajkund and Badkal Lakes of Haryana along the Delhi border is being levelled by blasting, in gross violation of the Supreme Court orders in this regard; and

(b) if so, the details of steps Government have taken to protect the forests, as well as the environment of this area?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) As per the reports dated 9th August 2002 and 21st October 2002 prepared by Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority for the National Capital Region, in the matter of Writ Petition (Civil) No. 4677 of 1985; M.C. Mehta v/s Union of India and others, in areas adjoining Surajkund and Badkal Lake certain activities including mining have been done which are not in conformity with the orders of the Supreme Court. By its order dated 25.11.2002, Supreme Court has directed the State Government officials concerned to ensure compliance of the orders.

Endangered Species of Birds

† 1113. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bombay Natural History Society and Bird Life International have warned that the rate of decline in the birds of endangered species in India is increasing alarmingly;

(b) if so, whether these institutes have warned that two species of pinhead duck, forest owlet, jardons cruiser, Himalayan mountain quails, cranes and vultures are also included in the endangered birds, which need protection; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to protect these birds?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) (a) Bombay Natural History Society(BNHS), Birdlife International and several other organizations have been expressing concerns about decline in population of several bird species in India.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.